

Volume 22

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Number 12

Outlook — Iowa Deer Hunting — 1963

Tom Ballard

If you are one of Iowa's 12,000 shotgun deer hunters, you had better check your weapons—there is a record crop of whitetails to be hunted this season.

Prospects are very good for another record deer harvest. Last winter's most-season deer count was 23 per cent above that of 1962 and 50 per cent greater than the average since 1958.

This means one thing to you deer hunters—an estimated 33,200 deer will be available this month. That figure makes a bag limit of "one" deer simple and easy to fill doesn't it? But, let's not kid ourselves—the elusive Iowa whitetail isn't that easy to put in our sights.

For gun hunters have found driving or still hunting and stands to be productive methods for taking their limit. The bowhunters, and shotgunners as well, have been using the tree stand to advantage.

Last Year Best Yet

The '62 gun season was the best yet with 4,281 licensed hunters taking home. The total deer kill was 5,703; this includes deer taken by all methods: gun, bow, licensed hunter and landowner.

The 1962 hunter-success ratio is another encouraging figure: 52 per cent for licensed farmers and 41 per cent for urban hunters. That's pretty close to a 50:50 chance for getting venison into the freezer this winter. Considering the warm weather and lack of snow in December, Iowa deer hunters did very well.

County by county population estimates are much the same as last year excepting the general increase in herd size. Forty-one counties are listed as having a high deer population and only a dozen are relatively low.

Top Five Counties

Five counties continue to have the top deer herds: Allamakee, Winnebago and Clayton to the northeast, with Pottawattamie and Adams on our western border. A total of 1,044 deer were taken from these five counties by hunters last year, nearly 25 per cent of the total kill in the state.

Zone I, comprising 25 counties in the northwest to north central areas, is limited to two days of hunting—December 14-15. Two days' hunting pressure is deemed necessary to avoid any possibility of overhunting this area of limited deer range.

Zone II counties will be open the 14th, 15th and 16th. Nearly one-third of the whitetails taken in 1962 were bagged on the third day, so that shotgun away Sunday evening, that old monarch with the phy rack may come strolling past your stand Monday.

Disease Study

In cooperation with the Conservation Commission, the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association and the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, we are asking for the deer hunter's help in attempting a study of deer diseases. All you need do is drop the deer heart in the plastic bag that is provided with your license, fill out the enclosed tag, tie the bag to the tag and take it to the nearest veterinarian within 24 hours. He will do the rest. Research, management, and hunter cooperation have been among the essentials in achieving our past ten successful seasons.

Don't forget to send in those report cards. They provide valuable information that is used in the management programs for hunting seasons to come. According to the 1962 report cards, 38.8 hours of hunting were required for each deer bagged, the average hunter saw 1.5 deer during the season, and a slightly higher percentage of hunters killed their deer in the morning.

Whether on evening, first day or third, Iowa deer hunters should expect another record-breaking deer season this month.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Iowa Conservationist

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COMMISSION MINUTES

Des Moines

November 5, 1963

FISH AND GAME

Approval was given to initiate condemnation proceedings on a ten-acre area of the Miami Lake site in Monroe County.

The Chief Fish and Game gave a report on the status of Triboji Beach on West Okoboji Lake.

The Commission met with Harold Kastor of Clear Lake to discuss the law concerning trapping in muskrat houses and clarify an Attorney General's opinion concerning such trapping.

LANDS AND WATERS

The Commission met with Wilma Smith and her attorney, John Connolly, to discuss the use of the Gull Point State Park bathing beach by the Boy Scout Camp nearby.

The Commission met with Mr. Hanson, attorney for the Prairie Gold Council, concerning the construction of a bathing beach near Gull Point State Park.

The Commission ordered further study on the problems involving rock removal from Lake Okoboji and adjacent lakes and the problems involved in the filling the various bottom areas adjacent to the shore line on West Okoboji Lake.

Approval was given to a plan for dredging Storm Lake which includes a harbor breakwater, a

beach and five islands to be constructed.

Approval was given for the release of an easement on a lot on Black Hawk Lake in Sac County.

The Commission authorized fencing to be placed around the concrete crippled children's trail located in Margo Frankel Woods State Park.

Camping fees of \$1.50 for improved camp grounds on twenty-six state parks were established, beginning April 1, 1964, with other areas to charge as before. Cabin rates at Pine Lake were established at \$35.00 a week and a price of 25 cents a bundle was established for firewood to be sold in state parks.

COUNTY CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Grundy County received approval for the acquisition of five acres of land by 25-year lease at an annual cost of \$10 per year called the Conrad Quarry which will include a one acre lake to be used for fishing with picnicking facilities.

Linn County received approval for the acquisition of 162 acres of land at a total cost of \$18,750, located on the Cedar River one mile downstream from the Ivanhoe Bridge on State Highway No. 1. This area to be used for boat launching, river access, fishing, picnicking, camping, nature study and hunting.

Franklin County received approval for the acquisition of 24 acres of land as an addition to Robinson Park through a 15-year lease at an annual cost of \$60 with the agreement that the property will be given to the county during the lease period.

Dubuque County received approval for a development plan for the Filmore Recreation Area consisting of 116 acres which will provide for a system of park roads, group camping, picnicking, a nature area, a fishing access and a 9-hole golf course.

Approval was given to a 25-year renewable management agreement with the Dubuque County Conservation Board for the Julien Dubuque Monument area of 12.3

Outdoor Education News

Book: *Rearing Insects in Schools* by R. E. Siverly. 113 p., \$2.75, William C. Brown Company, Inc., 135 South Locust, Dubuque, Iowa. Here is a well illustrated book that outlines the methods and techniques of rearing insects. This book is designed for use in elementary and junior high schools. There are specific chapters for rearing ants, grasshoppers, milkweed bugs, roaches, flies, mosquitoes and many other common insects. Many useful references are found within the book.

Anyone who has studied conservation knows that insects more

than any other class of animal can greatly affect the balance of nature. We believe Mr. Siverly's book offers a fresh approach to the studies of these creatures. The basic philosophy behind the publication of this book is that living insects are much more fun to study than dead ones. We are sure any teacher will find that this book has much to offer in making science classes more interesting. The book cuts technical language to the minimum and is very readable. — A. C. Haman, 1963 Director, Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp.

Cooperate with Hunters

From the Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman

"Pheasant hunting season starts on November 9 and this provides an excellent opportunity to promote better relationships with urban cousins.

"If responsible hunters ask permission to hunt on your lands, give them this opportunity if at all possible. If you'll cooperate with them they'll work with you.

"Sure, there are some city hunters who violate the rules of good sportsmanship. But you don't want to be judged as a farmer by actions of a few irresponsible rural residents. Therefore, don't blame all hunters by the actions of a few.

"It might be an extra bother for you to allow some hunters to wade through the corn fields. But if you'll show the extra effort, the hunter will think more highly of you as an individual and farmers as a group.

This recent editorial in the *Spokesman* points up the long-term trend toward good hunter-landowner relationships in Iowa. More and more Iowans are coming to realize that the farmer and the sportsman are not in opposition. In fact, we count a great many farmers among the most enthusiastic hunters. Although not required by law, many farmers purchase a hunting license each year. "I know I don't need a license on my own land," said one farmer during the recent pheasant opening, "but, after all, buying a license is just a part of hunting — me—I always have one."

It is indeed commonplace in Iowa to find the farmer and the sportsman one and the same.

acres of land subject to the approval of the Executive Council.

GENERAL

The Commission appointed six special police officers from the staff and four special police officers among the water safety patrol.

Travel was approved for various staff members and commissioners to Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Pipestone, Minnesota; a forestry meeting at Indianapolis, Indiana; the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee Meeting at Peoria, Illinois; the State Boating Law Administrators Meeting at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

A report was given by the Superintendent of Public Relations on out-of-state sports show planning and approval was given for a tentative itinerary.

Approval was given for a resolution concerning development work on the Blackbird-Tieville-Decatur Bend Complex on the Missouri River.

A planning report was given by the Planning Director.

Authorization was given for Commissioner Fisher and Director Speaker to attend Nebraska Governor Morrison's meeting concerning the planning for the Lewis and Clark Trailway at Camp Ashland, Nebraska.

The Conservation Commission met with the Natural Resources Council at Fort Madison on November 6 to tour the Skunk River area and discuss the proposed straightening project in the Green Bay Bottoms area.

Although the shrew is the smallest of all North American mammals, it is also one of the fiercest. It doesn't hesitate to leap on a mouse that may be twice its size. Almost anything smaller than a weasel that crawls, runs, or flies is tempting to this insatiable assassin.

Animal Superstition**BEAR**

Ever heard of a bear hug? Popular fiction has it that when a bear attacks, it first seizes its victim and squeezes him to death — a "bear hug," then devours him. But there is no evidence to support this at all. Bears kill with their front paws aided by claws and teeth. (A bear is known to break the neck of a bison bull with a single blow.)

Another fanciful notion has it that when encountering a bear attacked by one, the proper procedure is to lie, face down, on the ground and hold your breath. bear, believing you to be dead, then go off. This technique works only in fiction books as a bear could readily differentiate between a dead and a live person. Most bears will only attack a mentally unbalanced, provoke cruelty, protecting cubs, or if it becomes too familiar and bores its overtures for food.

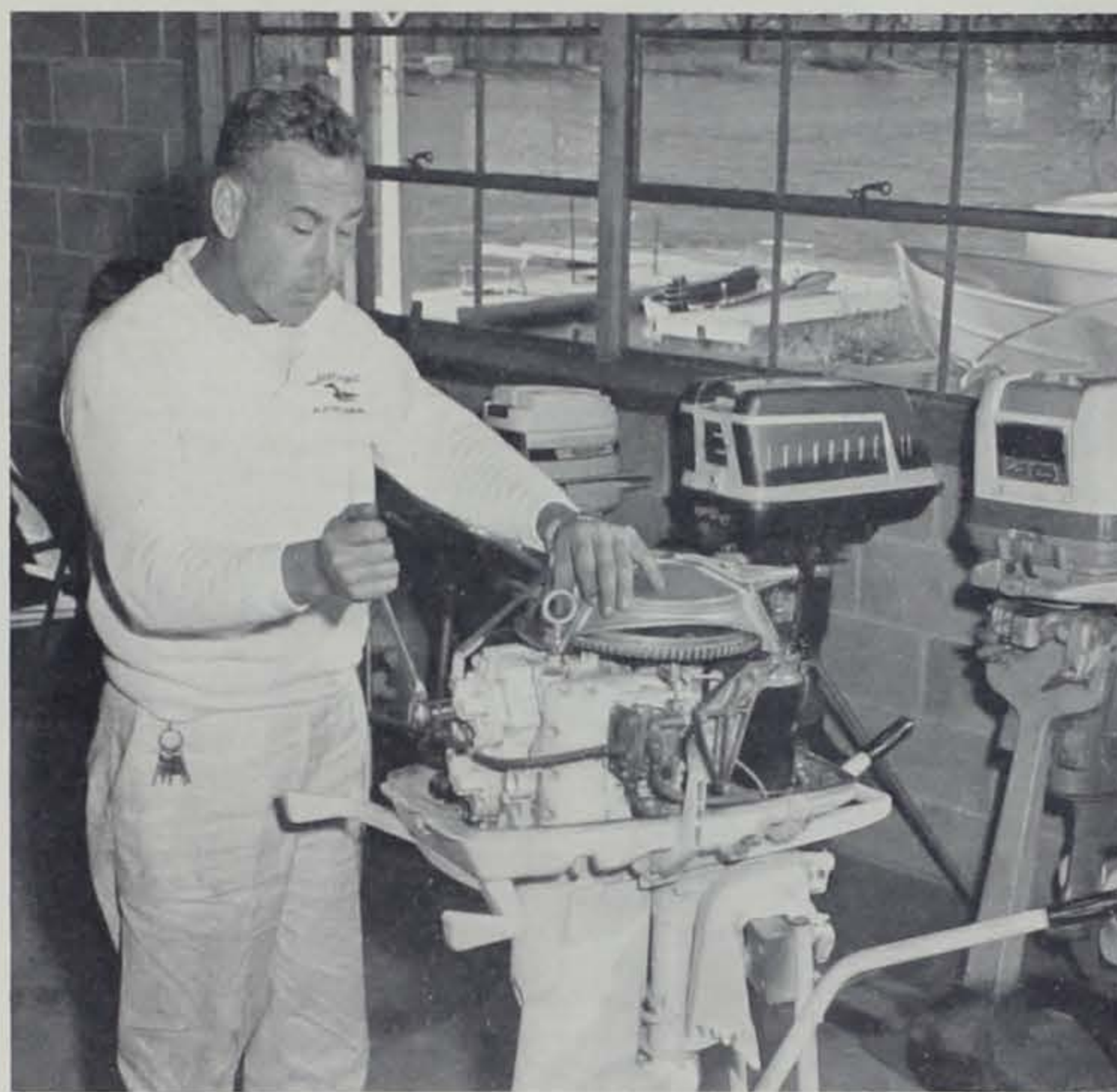
RACCOON

The smaller cousins to the raccoons, also have stories floating about them. There is some truth in the story that they wash their food before eating it. The reason for this peculiar action is not known but it does not indicate cleanliness since the water used for washing may be dirtier than the food. When a raccoon appears washing the food, he is actually turning it over and over for some part more inviting to the rest which he promptly consumes. In some instances, coons will tempt to soften the article by cleaning it.

Some believe raccoons wash their food because they enjoy doing it in the water. But at times they almost wear the water out in their enthusiasm. However, the reason, raccoons derive considerable pleasure from the process.

How to Hibernate a Motor

Jack Kirstein



Wayne Miller of Des Moines, an outboard motor specialist with a local marina, sees many a boater with expensive repair bills due to improper winter storage of his motor.

Jack Kirstein Photo.

Outboard motors, like bears, go into hibernation during the cold winter months. Unlike bears, your motor can do nothing to prepare itself for the winter months ahead. Before you put your prized powerhouse to bed until next season, make sure it is protected.

Take a quick look at your instruction manual will show that there is a need for some prime attention to all parts of your motor. During the past year, at just one marina, thirty to forty motors were brought in by their owners who thought that they had a tune-up. "I can't get it to start," they complained. On inspection, it was found that moisture in the air during the previous summer had entered through exhaust ports and intake manifolds. The motors had not been winterized, this moisture collected on cylinder walls, needle bearings and other parts like with "old man rust" taking over.

Fifteen to twenty motors also came in with problems in the lower water assembly. Of these, rust was the major damage, but some water left in the rear had frozen while the motor was stored outside, and the aluminum castings had burst from expanding pressure of ice.

Expensive Negligence

Removing this rust after it is sometimes causes additional damage. In the case of rust on cylinder walls, the rings will stick to the walls as though welded. If broken loose, the rings may break and score the cylinder walls. A motor is run with rust of last year on needle bearings, the grinding of the crankshaft on the rings will necessitate the replacement of the bearings, if not the crankshaft as well. On a small motor of five horsepower or less, this would mean a repair bill of \$50 or more. On the big motors of twenty horsepower or more, the cost for all bearings and the lower casting could run as high as \$200 as it did on one this year.

What do we do to make sure we won't have a big repair bill next year?

Take time, right now, to do a preventive maintenance.

Winterizing Your Motor

First, provide yourself with a barrel or tank of water in which to run your motor. A motor should never be run dry, it causes its own kind of repairs.

Mount the motor on the tank, fill the tank with water, and use the following steps to prevent rust. Prepare a mixture of about a quart of gasoline adding to this at least a half pint of your standard oil. Start the motor on your

regular mixture and, after a few minutes, shut off or disconnect your fuel lines. When the motor starts to miss, indicating that all gas has been drawn through the lines and the carburetor, feed in this new mixture. Flood the engine with the new mixture by choking until it stalls. This will spread the heavy oil mixture evenly over the internal parts of the motor. Run this mixture through about five or ten minutes before flooding.

Now pay particular attention to the gas tank. If it is an integral part of the motor, drain it entirely. Winter evaporation of the

gasoline in a tank, line, or carburetor will leave a gummy sludge that means trouble if not removed.

Gas tanks should be left empty, or if yours is a remote tank, at least be sure it is completely filled. The half-full or nearly empty tank is the big offender.

The Lower Unit

Drain the oil from your lower unit. Many times, sand or moss will enter this unit and hold moisture through the winter. At times it will clog the tiny drain holes in the underwater assembly and if enough water is left, any

(Continued on page 94)

IOWA HAS NEW FIRE DEPARTMENT

Early in October a local farmers group of the Sand Cove area in Allamakee County organized what is to be their own fire department. They appointed Peter Colsch as Fire Warden and all signed to help suppress fires in the area.

An afternoon of instruction was held on the Colsch farm by the New Albin Fire Chief, Glen Meyers. Members of the Sand Cove Fire Department learned the most effective way of using each tool as well as the most efficient order of the tools in on-the-spot construction of a fire line for suppression of grass and woods fires. Tractors and machinery were on hand building fire lines to form fire stops in the plantations. Milo Peterson, Fire Prevention Forester, and Bill Ritter, District Forester, represented the Conservation Commission and helped train the new fire department. The portable 150 gallon tank unit with attached pump and hose was demonstrated by personnel from the Yellow River State Forest. Smokey the Bear attended to endorse the program.

The Sand Cove fire crew consists of these volunteers: Fire Warden Peter Colsch; Edwin L. Wymiller, Lawrence Mitchell, James Mitchell, Walter Hammell, Raymond Zoll, James P. Moore, Jesse Garrett, Robert Colsch, Lester C. Fink, Charles E. King, Clem Colsch, Earl J. Moore and Gerald Colsch.

These men have a real interest in fire prevention and protection. Much of the Sand Cove area previous to 1957 was made worthless by moving sand that formed regular sand dunes. Since then more than 65,000 trees have been planted. The Sand Cove area with its trees, most of which have been

(Continued on page 93)



STATE FIRE LOSS AT 10-YEAR HIGH

Milo Peterson

Fire Prevention Forester

Iowa has suffered its worst fire loss in over ten years. A total of 67 fires have blackened nearly 2,000 acres of cropland, pasture and timber in the state since January 1, 1963.

Until recent rains, Iowa joined other states in experiencing one of the driest falls on record. The number of forest fires in the United States is running about 35 per cent higher than in recent years. Most unusual for Iowa was the large size of several fires this year. Fires of 50 acres are not usually common in Iowa, but this year many fires have reached 100 acres with the largest burning approximately 300 acres.

\$165,000 Loss

The dollar loss is estimated at \$165,000 and includes the loss of crops, pasture, timber, buildings, materials, and planted pine stands. The loss in acres included 453 acres of cropland, 484 acres of pasture, and 920 acres of timber and pine plantations. All rural fires, except those confined to houses and barns, are reported to the State Forester in the Conservation Commission. Fires occurring in Iowa are reported to the regional office of the U. S. Forest Service at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Fire reports in Iowa are sent the State Forester by most rural fire departments as well as Commission employees.

The number one cause of rural fires was debris burning which includes brush burning, weeds and crop field debris. Thirty-nine of the 67 fires were caused by such burning. Smokers accounted for the next highest total.

Other causes included hunters and fishermen, campers, railroads, woods workers, machinery, lightning and miscellaneous or unknown.

It is interesting to note that our hunters and fishermen have a good



Iowa wild fires cause \$165,000 damage to crops, pasture and woodlands this past year. Careless debris burning was prime cause.

record of being careful with fire in Iowa. Only about 3 per cent of the fires were reported as being caused by this group. It is agreed that hunters and fishermen are a great help in sometimes suppressing small fires or reporting them at once to the nearest farmer.

Ditch bank burning and brush burning have been done for years, however, it is during a dry year like 1963 that the average Iowa landowner gets in trouble. Burning conditions reach a point where the ground fuel is explosive and fires that normally creep along the ground suddenly race across field, through pastures and timberlands. The Conservation Commission through news releases, radio and television programs and poster projects alerts the public to the existing danger of large rural fires.

Iowa state parks and forests were not spared. In 1963 a total of 14 of the 69 fires occurred on units under control of the Conservation Commission.

Iowa Fire Laws

Iowa has three fire laws which are included in the Code of Iowa. They are as follows:

Setting out fire. If any person willfully, or without using proper caution, set fire to and burn, or cause to be burned, any prairie or timberland, or any inclosed or cultivated field, or any road, by which the property of another is injured or destroyed, he shall be fined not exceeding five hundred dollars, or imprisoned in the county jail not more than one year, or be both so fined and imprisoned in the discretion of the court.

Allowing Fire to Escape. If any person, between the first day of September in any year and the first day of May following, set fire to, burn, or cause to be burned any prairie or timberland, and allow such fire to escape from his control, he shall be imprisoned in the county jail not more than thirty days, or be fined not exceeding one hundred dollars.

Damages by Fire. Any corporation operating a railway shall be liable for all damages sustained by any person on account of loss or injury to his property occasioned by fire set out or caused by the operation of such railway. Such damages may be recovered by the party injured in the man-

ner set out in Sections 8005 to 8008 inclusive, and to the same extent save as to double damages.

The 1963 fire season has come to a close. It was a bad year for fire loss, but thanks to many individuals and fire departments who did a fine job in fire prevention and suppression, the loss was reduced compared with the danger present in the spring and fall seasons.

Another year and another fire season are only a few months away and the lessons learned in 1963 should serve as a prevention guide in the new year.

Did You Know?

The kangaroo rat is neither a rat nor a kangaroo. It is a native American that is more closely allied with the pocket mouse.

Although a young cottontail rabbit has only one chance in twenty of reaching its first birthday, it is one of our most common animals.

During the summer the rooster pheasant, his harem, with the chicks, remain in a relatively small area—usually less than 80 acres.

Owls have zygodactyl feet (two toes forward, 2 back) with the rear toe reversible.

While pursuing prey, a bat can twist, turn and dodge in flight, with much greater agility than almost any bird.

Rats are the most prolific of mammals and, if living conditions are suitable, a female will breed throughout the year.

Pheasants were first brought to the United States and released into the wild in 1881 when 26 ring-necked pheasants were imported directly from Asia, where they were released in Oregon.



"You left your snowshoes where?"

IOWA'S WINTER OWLS

Carol Buckmann

Winter winds whistled plainly across the frozen tundra breaking the silence of the blinding snow. An Arctic horned owl flew silently like a passing shadow, swooped, unheard, searching for its prey. Its quest for food proved useless and hunger drove the great bird reluctantly onward.

Iowa becomes the winter refuge of many great northern owls with their natural food, including lemmings (mouse-like rodents) and hares, becomes scarce. Arctic and western horned owls are found only in winter. Both the far northern birds resemble our native great horned owl but are much lighter colored to blend more closely with their barren Arctic homes. Arctic horned owls, the palest of the three, are white with gray bars. The western horned owls fit between the other two, being lighter than the Arctic horned, but not as light as the Arctic.

Three of these bloodthirsty "kings of the air" are large, powerful birds reaching a two-foot wingspan and a 4½-pound weight. These owls seek larger prey including small mammals (even weasels and civet cats), birds and recently become a menace to poultry. A skunk's only real enemy is the great horned owl who doesn't seem to mind the skunk's spray.

Due to their fondness for poultry, game birds and animals, the "great horneds" have the distinction of being the only owls not protected by law. These night hunters aren't all bad, though, as much of their diet consists of mice and other harmful rodents.

All winter owls are night hunters. The short-eared, great snowy and hawk owls dispel the age-old fallacy that owls are blind in daylight and hunt only at night.

In nature's scheme, the role of feathered hunters was well considered. To approach their prey both day and night hunters

are equipped with soft, fluffy plumage making their shadowy flight noiseless and serving as insulation against sub-zero temperatures. (It's little wonder Indians called them hush wing.") All winter owls are feathered from head to toe except the great horned owls which lack feathers on the bottoms of their powerful feet.

Snowy owls are fully feathered; even their claws are concealed in white fluff. These snowy hunters are about the size of great horned owls but don't have such powerful legs. They vary from pure white to white with heavy, soft brown barred plumage. These rare, beautiful birds are easy targets to trigger happy shooters unfamiliar with these winter visitors. These valuable mousers are fully protected by law and there is no excuse for shooting them.

The lemming population, a favorite snowy owl food, is subject to fluctuation. Although there are reports of snowy owls each winter, about every eight years the lemming population reaches a low ebb and these great birds find the going tough. It's then they spread their 60-inch wings and migrate south in greater numbers.

Accustomed to daytime hunting on the northern barrens, "snowys" hunt here in the open where they are often seen in fields, on fence posts and even downtown perched on buildings. Snowys, like other over-wintering owls, migrate only as far south as necessary depending on the food abundance.

All these birds have yellow eyes except the brown-eyed barn owls and bluish-brown-eyed barred owls, which are year 'round residents. Their large, external ears hidden beneath the face feathers, make it possible for them to hunt with both ears and eyes. The ear openings are back of the eyes. Marsh hawks are the only other birds with such an arrangement. Other birds have very small external ear openings.

On rare occasions, great gray and hawk owls are seen in Iowa during the winter. Hawk owls are



This tiny saw-whet owl is seen during winter in some Iowa conifer stands. Jim Sherman Photo.

native of northern Canada while grays come from southern Canada and northern Minnesota. Both are yellow-eyed, daytime fliers with heavily barred plumage. Great gray owls seem larger than even the great horned owls, but only because of their fluffy plumage, as their bodies are smaller.

Long and short-eared owls come to Iowa from northern Minnesota and southern Canada but some remain all year. The ornamental head tufts known as "ears" distinguish these two birds. Short-eared owls have short, inconspicuous tufts, while the darker, long-eared owls have two-inch tufts.

From fall to spring, short-eared owls can be seen in fields and marshes where field mice are abundant. With bat-like flight, they swoop down, flapping their wings and flying low, searching the marsh for mice in the afternoon and evening.

Long-eared owls prefer thickets but are sometimes seen in marshes. Both owls spend most of the daylight hours roosting in windbreaks in the same vicinity from day to day.

Although the diets of both the long and short-eared owls is 98 per cent mice giving them the shared title of World Champion Mouser, the gentle little saw whet does its fair share. It is known to consume 60 to 80 mice per week—a lot of mice for a little, 8-inch owl.

This smallest of the owls is never very common. They also migrate from northern Minnesota

and Canada, where they return to nest in February and March. This gentlest of owls is easy to photograph and Jack Musgrove, Curator of the State Historical Building, reports coming to within 18 inches of a wide-awake saw whet. They are such sound sleepers, though, they can be captured without being awakened.

The only owl that can be confused with the saw whet is the screech owl, a permanent Iowa resident. This owl is a little larger and has ear tufts which are lacking in the saw whet.

Burrowing owls also migrate, but prefer a warmer climate than Iowa offers. The freeze interferes with their burrowing habits, and burrowing owls migrate south, returning for the summer. These medium-sized birds have bare legs enabling them to dig in the earth where they feast on insects.

Owls have been misunderstood and mistakenly feared for centuries. Their uncanny expression gives them a staring, menacing look while their night hunting habits, hootings, gobblings and screams have associated them with sorcerers, witches, ghosts and goblins. Only recently has their value in controlling mice and rodents been fully realized.

A winter sunset would not be as beautiful without the sight of a short-eared owl swooping in a late evening hunt, nor would a moonlight night be complete without the plaintive "hoo-hoo-hoo" of a great horned owl.

FIRE DEPT.—

(Continued from page 91)

Since 1959, is fast becoming an area of grain cropping. Trees have helped to stop the flow of sand. Grass now grows where.

Iowa has several similar fire organizations. The fire wardens of these fire departments represent many different occupations—farmers, buttermakers, gardeners, storekeepers, president of church brotherhood, farmers. The firemen are mostly landowners and farmers. These fire departments usually are ten or twenty miles from the rural truck town fire department. They are the first line of attack in case of woods or grass fires. They

can attack the fire while it is small. A few men can suppress a small fire but much equipment and many men are needed later.

These rural volunteer groups use their farm machinery supplemented by a cache of hand tools furnished by the Forestry Section of the State Conservation Commission. These tool caches consist of back pack pumps, shovels, swatters, rakes, axes, and the like. The hand tools also serve a useful purpose helping prevent fire from escaping if someone is going to burn intentionally. In fact, some of the caches of tools have not been used for actual fire suppression but have been used many times where controlled burning was to take place.

Good Year for "Fuzztails" Too!

Denny Rehder

"With pheasant and quail seasons running right through mid-winter, who is going to take time to go rabbit hunting," one fellow remarked after seeing the hunting regulations for this fall.

Chances are a lot of hunters will take time for rabbits. This was a good production year for them, just as it was for pheasant and quail, and they should be readily available.

Whether or not rabbits enjoy their favored position among Iowa small game, the fact remains that the cottontail is extremely popular with the hunting set this time of year. With our good populations, they should be offering some fine shooting.

Good Target

Rabbits can be taken with shotgun, rifle, pistol or bow. That's the fun in rabbit hunting; choose your weapon and you can bet "ol' fuzztail" will give you some practice. More rabbit hunters are turning to the handgun and bow for added enjoyment of their sport. Both offer challenges to the hunter.

Whatever you use, you'll soon feel as one bowhunter did after shooting three times without a hit. "That's what I like about rabbits, they're so easy to lead for a shot—steady by jerks like a toad a-hopping."

Rabbits are also hunted by a number of predators. Such pressure necessitates heavy escape cover such as dense multiflora rose or plum thickets, grassy sloughs or ditches and wood or brush piles. If the cover is sufficient, the rabbit then needs a supply of food nearby. Cornfields near heavy cover would be a logical hunting spot.

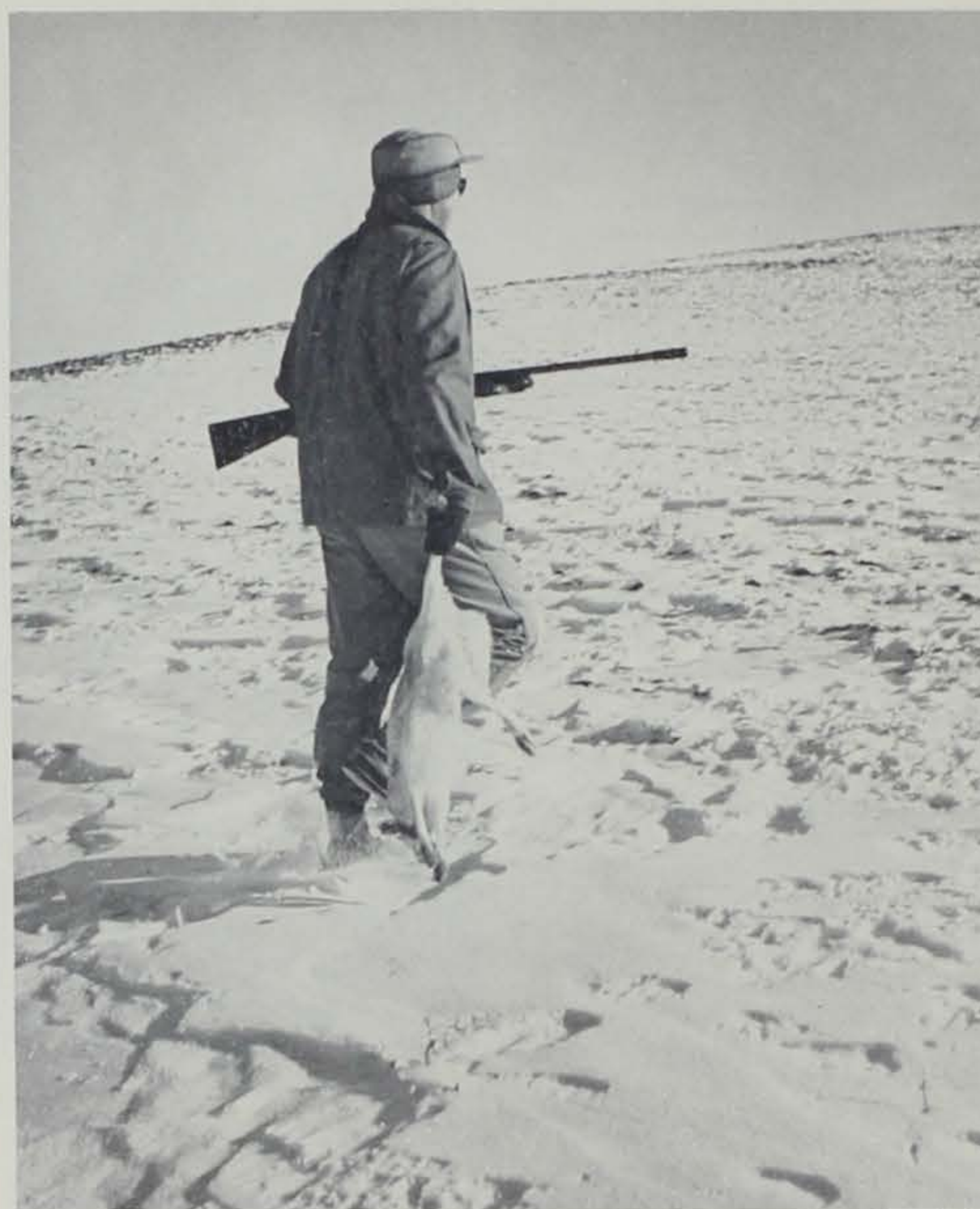
New Snow Best

Anytime during the open season running through February 23 is a good time for rabbit hunting. Most hunters, though, prefer a morning after a fresh snow when tracks are new. Tracks also help out another way. The hunter can tell where the rabbits are located and where to find the heaviest concentrations of bunnies.

Snow also helps spot rabbits by contrasting them with the light background. Without snow, the bunnies would melt right into the cover and not be seen.

Weather conditions, too, are important for the rabbit hunters. In cold weather rabbits will "sit tight" and it will take some work to kick them from the cover. When weather is fair and sunny, rabbits will usually come from the cover into the warm sunlight. This is especially noticeable the first warm day after a cold snap.

Another angle adding to your rabbit hunting pleasure is the use



Jack or cottontail, 1963 was a good year. Rabbit hunters will be out in force when the snow flies and a light tracking snow marks every move of the popular "fuzz-tail."

of one of the "rabbit hounds" such as the beagle or basset. These breeds are made for rabbit hunting—low to the ground and excellent noses for trailing. They work methodically keeping the rabbits circling and moving, but never pushing them hard enough to force them into "holing up." The hunter can wait in one spot for his dog to work the rabbits to him.

Proper Preparation

No matter how you hunt your rabbit, the anticipation of getting it onto the table calls for some care in handling. Field dressing or simply drawing the animal will insure best eating.

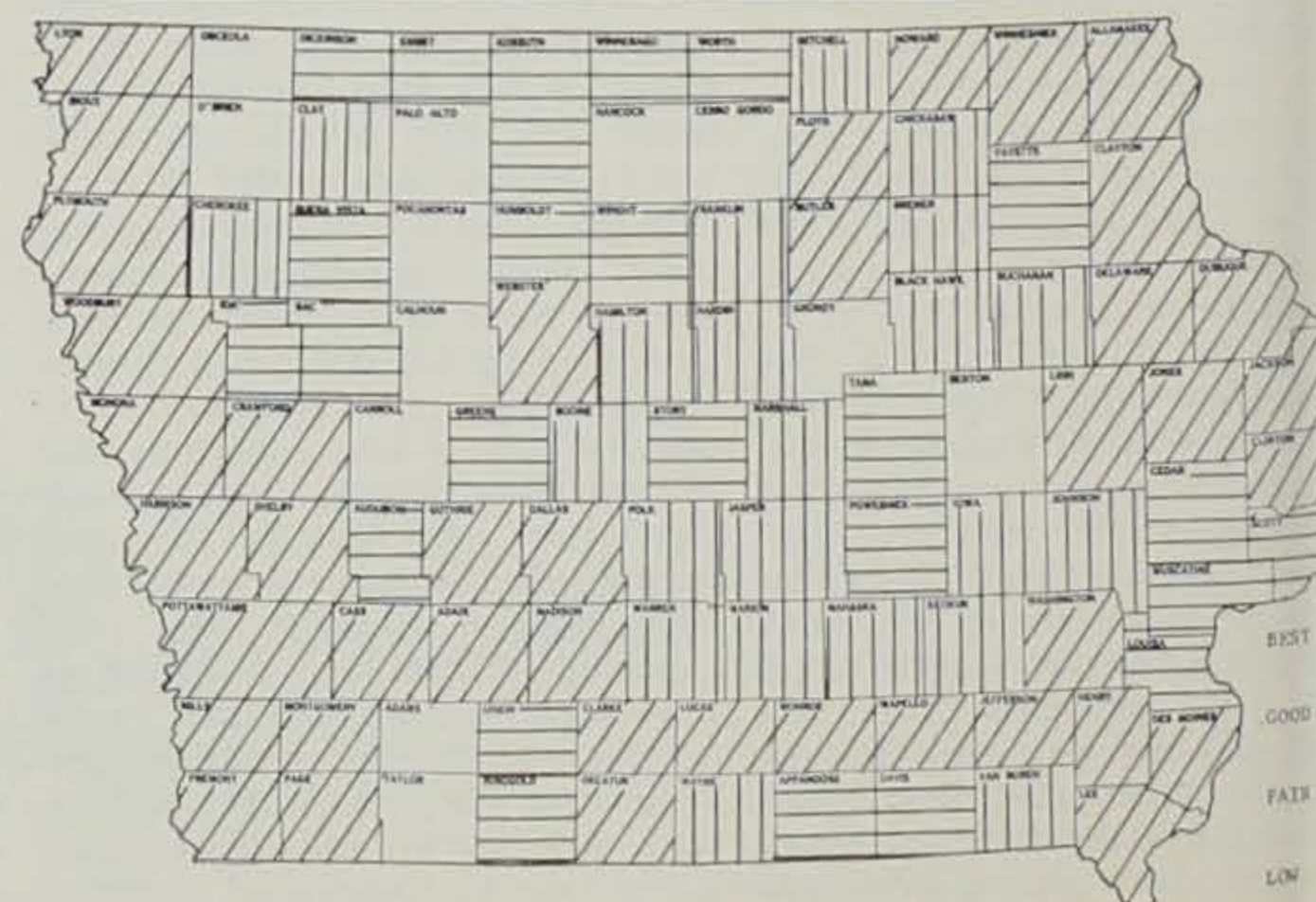
If you plan to field dress—the method preferred by most hunters—take along some small plastic bags to protect the cleaned game during the trip home. You should draw the rabbit immediately whether you skin it or not to remove damaged intestines that will affect the taste of the meat.

With a hunting knife, make an incision beginning between the hind legs cutting all the way to the lower rib cage. Reach into the body cavity and work the intestines loose, pulling them and the organs from the body. Then stuff snow or grass in the cavity to help absorb the body heat. The

snow or grass can be shaken out later and your rabbit will be in prime condition for the table.

Although some people claim that a cougar will kill about 300 of its favorite prey every year, estimates by naturalists run from 35 to 100 kills a year for the average cat.

The striped ground squirrel often steals eggs or fledglings from nests of ground-dwelling birds and has been known to kill a large domestic chicken.



Iowa's 1963 Deer Population Density.

MOTORS—

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freezing temperatures can be expected to burst that unit.

When you are certain that the moisture has been eliminated, refill the lower unit with fresh oil.

Incidentally, if you are not do-it-yourself buff or for other reasons want to have the winterizing done at your local repair shop, the oil they use is called "fogging oil" and contains a special rust inhibitor. It is not available over the counter in most areas as yet.

No special preparations are needed the following season. Put a properly prepared motor back in use. Filling the tank with fresh gas and checking for oil quantities is all that is necessary. The excess oil is quickly burned out of the engine and you're ready for another summer of fun.

Also take this time to check spark plugs and ignition wires. It is best not to try to clean or regap plugs. Sand blasting plugs removes some of the fine as well as the carbon and changes the temperature range of the plug itself. This shows up in a running motor or in repeated fouling of the plugs.

It is possible that your propeller should be checked also. Summer use often includes hitting occasional dead-head under water or plowing through a sand bar. This can change the pitch of the blades, and they should be checked by a competent repairman.

Battery Care

If your motor uses a wet battery, it should be brought indoors for the winter. Store it off the floor preferably on a wooden platform and by all means keep it from contacting any cement surface. It should be charged at least once during the winter and it is best possible to leave it on a trickle charger to maintain its condition. A run-down battery is susceptible to freezing.

A good over-all cleaning of motor, boat, and trailer is

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Jim Sherman Photo.

BACKYARD BUCKS

John Madson

to those of us who grew up in the "good old days" when deer were as rare as jobs and as ill as moonshine, big game hunters bore the stamp of hero-

they were intrepid souls who made long treks into the High Country or the Cruel North, emerging a fortnight later with the new whiskers and hard-won wisdom.

But their star has faded. Today you'd probably come home to find all the glory sopped up by a farmer who scragged a 16-point buck behind his corncrib. Almost anyone with a gun can now be a game hunter and probably leave his township. There are deer everywhere, and today's game hunter literally has good hunting at his elbow.

There's much to be said for wilderness trips, but the average hunter will probably do better near home. He'll save money and time. He also knows his home country far better than some distant mountain—and you just can't know a deer range too intimately. Most important of all, he'll be able to scout the deer range well ahead of the season and maybe have a trophy staked out for hunting day.

Knowing deer range and deer movements is vital to hunting success. It's smart to begin your deer hunt in early fall, check the lay of the land, talking to landowners and getting to know them and finding deer runs and signs. In your autumn fish-watch sandbars and mudflats for deer prints. On your squirrel hunts, watch for pawing in the acorn ridges, and skinned birds where bucks have shadowed.

You can do a lot of scouting on weekends and evenings before the season. Drive slowly along back roads as soon after rain

as possible, watching for hoof prints on road shoulders that may indicate major deer crossings and travel routes. Early drives—at dawn or shortly thereafter—will often pay off with sightings of deer at the edges of pastures and meadows. When you see such deer, thoroughly scout the country beyond. Deer are great creatures of habit, and often leave well-defined trails between their midday bedding ground and their dawn feeding areas. If you find such a heavily-used trail, be there in ambush in the first dawn of the open season. But make it early in the season, for deer swiftly change their living patterns when they're hunted and your "hotspot" can cool off overnight.

Don't expect to see many deer during your pre-season scouting. Look for deer signs, and talk to people who may see deer regularly—farmers, creamery truck drivers, rural mail carriers, applegrowers, game wardens.

Learn the land. Watch for lumbering activities and newly-cleared land, new cropfields, and small isolated fields in timber or near creeks. Know drainage patterns. County plat maps can be helpful; they show abandoned roads and railway spurs, remote creeks and ponds, and locations of farm buildings. When you pencil in woodlot and field patterns on such maps, adding boundary lines and farmers' names and all reported deer sightings and trails, you have a valuable reference.

Backyard bucks may be worth any effort it takes to get them. Living in conjunction with civilization and agriculture, with a better variety of good food than wilderness deer, they grow into splendid trophies and prime rations.

You can go farther, and grow fiercer whiskers. But you probably won't find better bucks than the ones at home.—Olin Mathison
Chemical Corporation.

HORNS and ANTLERS

David H. Thompson

A great many large grazing or browsing animals, the ones which have cloven hoofs and chew their cud, are armed with either horns or antlers. These weapons are used for defense against the attacks of bloodthirsty enemies and in duels between males for possession of a female or a harem of females. Although both horns and antlers are borne on the head and have similar uses, they are very different structures.

Most of the world's cattle, sheep and goats—both wild and domesticated—have horns. In North America the only living horn-bearers are those noble beasts, the bison (usually called buffalo), the musk ox, the Rocky Mountain goat and the bighorn sheep.

Horns, in contrast to antlers, are unbranched. They are hollow, horny sheaths enclosing pointed bony cores that arise from the front of the skull. These sheaths are made of keratin, the same substance as our fingernails. They continue to grow throughout the life of the animal and are never shed. Horns are commonly found in both sexes of a species and are always in pairs. The unicorn, that one-horned creature pictured in the British royal coat of arms, is strictly mythological.

Antlers are the crowning glory of the males of the deer family. In this continent they are borne

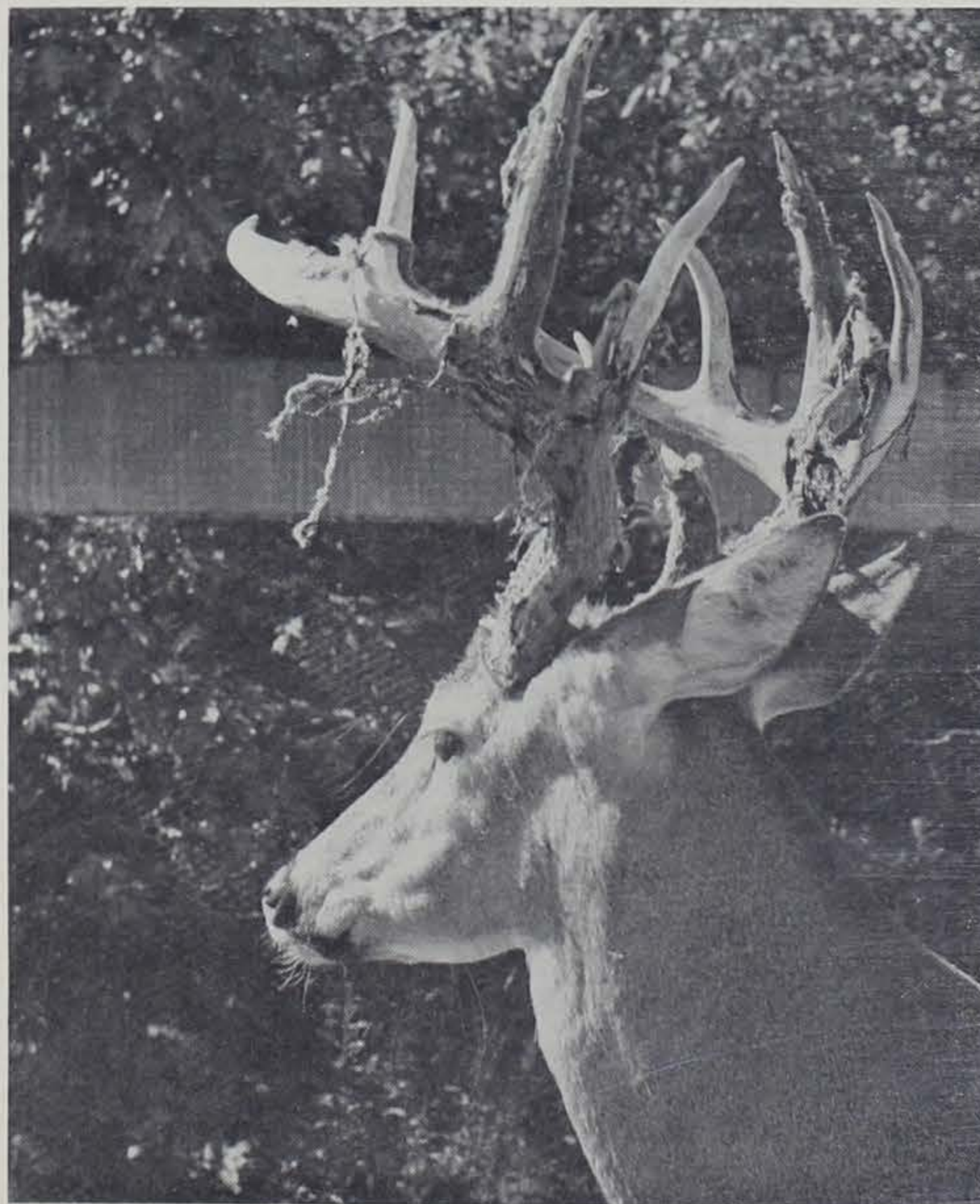
by the bull moose, the bull elk or wapiti, and the bucks of the white-tail, blacktail and mule deer. In the caribou and reindeer of the far north, both sexes have antlers. The latter is a domesticated Old World caribou brought from Siberia to Alaska about 70 years ago.

Amazingly, the solid bony antlers of all these are shed each year. For example, the whitetail buck drops his in midwinter or early spring. Soon, a new pair begins to form as furry knobs that rapidly expand into the curving and branching shape of the mature structures. During this growth period, the antlers are soft, covered with a velvety skin, have a rich blood supply, and are quite sensitive. By late summer the blood supply stops and the "velvet" begins to dry up and peel off. Then his antlers harden into bone which he polishes by rubbing against trees and branches—probably because they itch.

Although the bucks are timid while their antlers are growing, they become ill-tempered with the approach of the mating season in late autumn. There are fierce fights between them for possession of the does. These battles are seldom fatal but sometimes their antlers become tightly locked together and both animals starve to death.

Contrary to common belief, the

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This fine specimen is just shedding his velvet. A new rack must be grown every year.

Jack Kirstein Photo.

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MOTORS—

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worthwhile. Repainting saves you money in future repairs. Trailer tires should be checked for proper inflation, especially if the boat is to remain on the trailer through the winter. Now is also the time to repack the bearings in trailer wheels.

Any routine wear is best corrected now. Points, condensers, coils, gaskets, water pumps, fuel systems, and plugs need special attention, and it is easier now to make the repairs when the motor is not in use.

Some maintenance manuals suggest that a plug be removed and oil poured in while the motor is cranked by hand. This will suffice on some engines, but to be safe, running the heavy oil mixture as we suggested above will reach many areas such as needle bearings on wrist pins, rod bearings, and main bearings that might be missed in the slower turning by hand.

Lubricate all control linkage and change the fuel filter. A filter is low-priced, most about 35c, and is cheap insurance.

A check of the electrical system, lights, and such may reveal more needed maintenance that can best be done now.

Remember to put a good cover over the boat and trailer if it has to remain outside through the cold and snow, or at least leave all small boats upside down, and with a fresh coat of paint. Motors should be stored upright; never on their side.

If you follow these points and

have your marine equipment all ready for the first wintry blasts, your boat will be ready for its captain next year when the bears come out into the sunshine and your motor ends its winter sleep.

ANTLERS—

(Continued from page 95)

number of points on a deer's antlers do not tell its age. Beginning with a pair of simple "spikes" in its first year, the number increases until the fifth year with up to twelve points. With advancing age, fewer and fewer points develop until an old buck may have only simple spikes again.

Mounted heads of animals with unusually large, symmetrical horns or antlers are the prized possessions of big game hunters. One of the most coveted trophies is the bighorn ram with his massive curling horns. The shovel-like antlers of a record moose have a spread of six feet or more and weigh over sixty pounds. The extinct Irish elk had the largest antlers known—over eleven feet from tip to tip.

Beginning with prehistoric man, horns and antlers have had many uses. Eskimos shaped spoons and dippers from musk ox horns. Indians made hunting bows from the bighorn, garden tools from elk antlers, and spear points from deer. Powder horns for muzzle-loading guns came from cows and the ancient shofar, or ram's horn, is still blown in Jewish religious rites. In the wild, shed antlers are soon eaten by gnawing mice and other rodents.—Cook County Forest Preserve District.

Animal Superstitions

SKUNKS

There is a quaint old belief that skunks find assurance and a balanced diet in the skunk cabbage plant. Skunks do not eat this plant nor do they take up residence in such patches. The name is derived from the rank "skunklike" odor that arises when the stalks and roots are broken or bruised. The leaves resemble cabbage leaves.

In rural areas sometimes there is the belief that skunks in barns present a fire hazard. It's believed that a spark of electricity from the fur of a skunk will ignite gases always present in barns. Needless to say, there is no danger in sparks generated from a skunk's fur—not any more than from the hair of a man who would have more reason to be in a barn. The only inflammable gases in a barn would usually be inside a drum of fuel oil.

DEER

There is a persistent idea that whenever deer fawns are touched by human hands the mother, upon returning and noting that human scent, promptly deserts her offspring. What really happens is that the doe becomes suspicious of the nearby presence of humans from the scent on her young and remains in hiding for a while. When the danger appears to be past, the strong maternal feeling prompts her to return to her fawn.

People get the mistaken idea that fawns are deserted by the

parent when she has hidden her fawn and temporarily left to feed or explore the area.

There is the belief that fawns give off no odor and are therefore not pursued by predators. This is not completely true but it is correct to say that lying quiet without movement, a fawn gives less scent than when moving about. The musky scent of the adult deer is not produced by the young but some of the mother's body scent stays with the fawn.

BATS

One of the most persistent superstitions is that bats get in women's hair. When this happens the unfortunate woman is supposed to die within a year or, single and in love, her romance is supposed to end abruptly. Of course, the bat would be much more distressed and frightened than the woman if tangled in her tresses. An animal, like the bat, is able to wing its way through pitch black caves and thick forests far too clever to get itself tangled in anything so obvious as hair.

There is also the old superstition that the head of a bat kept in a person's company keeps watch over the person and keeps him from danger. A bat's watchfulness by night is implied in the tradition that if a bat is carried three times around the house and then nailed head down over the window it acts as a charm to ward off evil. This is still done in certain European countries and bats are occasionally seen hung head down above the entrance of barns to ward off evil.